

# Time Off for Public Duties Policy

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## 1. Introduction

As part of our commitment to being a socially progressive employer, we want to support staff who wish to use their skills and experience to serve the wider community.

In this policy you'll find information about what time off is available for public service, what pay you'll receive, how to request time off, and more.

Please note, if this policy refers to additional guidance, FAQs, online forms, or training, these are accessible to University colleagues on our [People Hub](#).

## 2. Who is Covered by This Policy?

This policy applies to all employees of the University.

## 3. Types of Public Service Roles

You'll be able to take a reasonable amount of time off for any of the following roles:

- Justice of the Peace (Magistrate)
- Member of a local authority/ local councillor
- Member of a statutory tribunal (for example, an employment tribunal, or Children's Panel)
- Member of a managing or governing body of an educational establishment
- Member of a school council or board, or school governor
- Member of a Health Authority/ Health Board
- Member of the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Member of the prison visiting committees (Scotland) or member of the prison independent monitoring boards (England or Wales)
- Member of Scottish Water or a Water Customer Consultation Panel.

If you hold a public role which isn't listed above, please talk to your manager about your situation and agree what support can be offered.

Just so you know, we have separate policies covering [Time Off for Jury Duty or Attendance as a Witness](#), [Staff Volunteering](#), [Reserve Forces](#), [Working for Outside Bodies](#), as well as a code of practice and guidance on [Being an Expert Witness](#).

## 4. What Time Off is Available?

If you're thinking about taking on a public service role, you should talk to your manager and give them an idea about the amount of time off you think you'll need each year. It's also a good idea to discuss any potential impact on your ability to perform your normal duties, how this might be minimised, and agree how much notice you need to give them when you're requesting time off.

You are entitled, by law, to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off for public duties, however, at Strathclyde we want to support you further by considering how you can carry out these duties and limit impact on your pay.

The maximum amount of time off work we'll normally give you (whether paid or unpaid) is up to 18 days in each annual leave year (pro-rata for part-time staff). However, in many cases, the amount of time off you need will be much less. Following discussions with your manager, they'll confirm the maximum amount of leave that you can take during the leave year and how much of that leave will be paid. And just so you know, if you hold more than one public role, the limit is still 18 days.

The amount of time off given by your manager, and whether it is paid or unpaid, will depend on the circumstances including:

- How much time is needed to effectively perform the public service role.
- The likely impact on your normal duties at the University and on the work of your department. For example, are you able to rearrange your working hours around your commitments or make up the time?
- Any other time off already given to you for public duties.
- Whether the public service role bears a close and direct relationship to your role at the University.

We'll do what we can to agree to requests for time off, but we may need to turn your request down if it's going to cause problems for your normal duties and the work of the University.

Any time off granted will only be for attendance at and travel to/from meetings, not for any preparatory work that needs to be done in advance.

Once your public service role is confirmed, your manager may ask for evidence of your appointment.

Managers should refer to our [Public Duties Manager FAQs](#) (staff login required) where they can find further information on granting paid and unpaid time off.

In all cases, managers are required to consult with their Head of Department and with the Assistant Director of HR (Business Partnering) before authorising paid leave.

## 5. Pay During Time Off

After consulting with the Head of Department and Human Resources, your manager will agree with you how much of the time off will be paid. If we can only agree to some of the time off being paid, we'll do our best to limit the effect on your pay. It may be possible for other arrangements to be made such as agreeing for you to make up the time, allowing you to take annual leave or, where your role allows, rearranging your working hours around your commitments.

For any paid time off we give you, we expect you to claim and declare any reimbursement for loss of earnings or any fees or allowances you receive (except travel and subsistence). This information will then be passed to our Payroll Team so that an equivalent amount can be deducted from your next salary payment. If you receive a fee or allowance which exceeds your normal earnings, then we'll deduct an amount equivalent to your normal earnings.

Failure to declare reimbursement of loss of earnings or any fees/ allowances received may be dealt with under our [Disciplinary Procedure](#).

## 6. Requesting and Recording Time Off

To allow for planning, you should give your manager as much notice of leave requests as possible.

Your manager will notify Human Resources of any authorised leave, and whether this is to be paid or unpaid. Human Resources will then write to you to confirm arrangements.

## **7. Further Information and Support**

If you have any queries about this policy, you might find it helpful to refer to our [Public Duties Staff FAQs](#) (staff login required). Alternatively, you can talk to your manager or contact [Human Resources](#).

## **8. Policy Review**

This policy is reviewed by Human Resources on a regular basis. To see when the next review is due, please refer to our [Policy Review Schedule](#) (staff login required) on our People Hub.